

REMARKS

In the July 29, 2004 Office Action, claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 11, 12, 14, and 15 stand rejected in view of prior art, while claims 3, 6-8, 13, 16-18 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter. No other objections or rejections were made in the Office Action.

Status of Claims and Amendments

In response to the July 29, 2004 Office Action, Applicant has amended the specification and claims 1, 7, 8, 11, 16, and 17 as indicated above, and canceled claims 3 and 13. Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for this indication of allowable subject matter and the thorough examination of this application. Thus, claims 1-2, 4-8, 11-12, 14-18 are pending, with claims 1 and 11 being the only independent claims. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested in view of above amendments and the following comments.

Interview Summary

On October 26, 2004, the undersigned conducted a personal interview with Examiner Emmanuel Monsayac Marcelo, who is in charge of the above-identified patent application. Applicant wishes to thank Examiner Marcelo for the courteous interview and the opportunity to discuss the above-identified patent application.

During the interview, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 120 based on the Sato patent in the July 29, 2004 Office Action has been discussed. It was confirmed that the Office Action interpreted the inner peripheral surface 91 of the cover 9 of the Sato patent as the contact face, and the outer peripheral surface of the boss portion of the cover 9 (radially opposite the inner peripheral surface 91) as the relief face.

Claim for Priority

On page 1 of the Office Action, priority under 35 U.S.C. 119 is acknowledged, but it is indicated that none of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received. In response, Applicant has amended the specification to indicate that the certified copies of the priority documents have been filed in the parent application, No. 10/042,183.

Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

On pages 2-3 of the Office Action, claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 11, 12, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,852,826 to Sato ("Sato patent"). In response, Applicant has amended independent claims 1 and 11 to clearly define the present invention over the prior art of record.

In particular, independent claims 1 and 11 have been amended to recite that the sealing portion of the seal member includes a lip portion that can contact the small diameter contact face of the second member. This limitation was recited in claim 3 as filed on November 17, 2003, which was indicated as containing allowable subject matter in the July 29, 2004 Office Action. Claims 1 and 11 have also been amended to recite that the second member has the small-diameter contact face and the large-diameter relief face. Clearly, the structure of claims 1 and 11 as now amended is *not* disclosed or suggested by the Sato patent or any other prior art of record.

Regarding the Sato patent, it does not disclose or suggest a lip portion that is formed on the sealing portion of the seal member and contacts the contact face. The recitation of the lip portion is the only limitation of claim 3 as filed on November 17, 2003, which was indicated as containing allowable subject matter. Also, the seal member 10 of Sato patent is clearly an O-ring, and does not have a lip portion. Thus, Applicant believes that the Sato patent does not disclose or suggest the arrangement of claims 1 and 11 as now amended.

Moreover, Applicant believes that the dependent claims 2, 4-5, 12, and 14-15 are also allowable over the prior art of record in that they depend from independent claims 1 and 11, and therefore are allowable for the reasons stated above. Thus, Applicant believes that since the prior art of record does not anticipate or suggest the arrangement of independent claims 1 and 11, neither does the prior art anticipate the dependent claims.

Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections.

Allowable Subject Matter

On page 3 of the Office Action, claims 3, 6-8, 13, and 16-18 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter. Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for this indication of allowable subject matter and the thorough examination of this application. In response, Applicant has amended claims 1 and 11 to incorporate the limitation of claims 3 and 13, and canceled claims 3 and 13. Claims 6-8 and 16-18 remain dependent from claims 1 and 11. Thus, Applicant believes that claims 6-8 and 16-18 are still in condition for allowance.

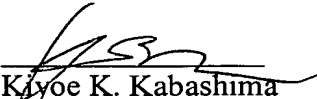
Prior Art Citation

In the Office Action, additional prior art references were made of record. Applicant believes that these references do not render the claimed invention obvious.

Appl. No. 10/713,191
Amendment dated October 28, 2004
Reply to Office Action of July 29, 2004

In view of the foregoing amendment and comments, Applicant respectfully asserts that claims 1-2, 4-8, 11-12, 14-18 are now in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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